

About the Author

Sweet Science, Savage Art is a social media account dedicated to promoting practical, healthy, and liberatory martial arts to the leftist and anti-fascist communities. This zine is shaped by my experiences as a martial artist, queer, anti-fascist, and anarcho-communist. Additional martial arts and community defense information and resources can be found at:

Sweet Science, Savage Art

<https://bsky.app/profile/sweetscisavart.bsky.social>



Stay safe, stay dangerous

HOW TO BUILD MARTIAL ARTS

&

COMMUNITY DEFENSE TRAINING PROGRAMS

A comprehensive and step-by-step
guide for instructors and organizers



By: *Sweet Science,*
Savage Art



Introduction

Recent developments have shown that the Left is lacking in the skills needed to defend ourselves, others, and our spaces. We are also underprepared to go on the offensive against fascist movements, state security forces, and capitalism. During this period the far-right has expanded their capacity to commit violence by fostering a culture of firearms, martial arts, and fitness. Active clubs and other 3.0 type groups are on the rise, Proud Boys have built their ranks through instigating street brawls, and old school boneheads are coming out of the woodwork. They also have more governmental power and influence than at any other time in recent memory. This has put us in a dangerous position where we have repeatedly seen our friends and comrades get seriously injured or driven into inactivity. As dire as this all seems, there is reason to hope. We have the intelligence, heart, and revolutionary discipline to catch up and win. The far-right engages in their training with toxic machismo, hate, and ultra-violence-fueled fantasies. We on the other hand can foster a culture of love, respect, compassion, honor, and justice in our training. Through this culture we can become powerful and dangerous. If done correctly we will create a liberated world where the only people who we have to be violent towards are those who wish us harm. However, to achieve this we need more than slogans and good intentions; we need action.

The fact of the matter is that no one is coming to save us. Likewise, no one is coming to start a training program for you. You will need to do that yourself. It may seem daunting, but you will be surprised what you can build with some hard work and dedication. This zine is a deep dive into martial arts and community defense training programs and is designed to help you build your own version. It will give you some of the options and considerations needed to make your program successful. It will also prevent you from repeating the mistakes of others. It is important to take this information as well as your own knowledge and adapt both to your unique needs and circumstances.

Special Thanks

Thank you to all the coaches and training partners I've had over the years as well as the gyms where I first started teaching. You made me into a better person and ignited a lifelong passion.

Thank you to the anti-fascist communities and leftist orgs of the Pacific Northwest including the fabulous queer gangs, the principled political formations, the scrappy insectos, studious research orgs, generous mutual aid networks, and the tough as nails skinhead and hardcore crews. I am honored to have spent the last 10 years organizing together and fighting in the streets shoulder to shoulder.

Thank you to the online leftist martial arts community. The current landscape is isolating as fuck and having your company kept my going. Whether we connected on Twitter, Bluesky, or Instagram I am proud to call you my comrade even if we have never met IRL.

Thank you to the leftist and anti-fascist gyms and martial arts programs around the world. Whether you're in Seattle, Portland, Montreal, North Carolina, Paris, Philly, Athens, New York, L.A., or London you are an inspiration and I am beyond lucky to have met and trained with you.

May the horrors of the world lead us not to despair, but to action. When we are outnumbered and have no where to run may we tuck our chins and walk forward with clenched fists. May our training and discipline lead to victory for we are more powerful than we can ever imagine.



Anti-Fascism Against Machismo - Separating machismo from violence and militant action. <https://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/theory/anti-fascism-against-machismo/>



Self-Defense for Radicals - https://www.pmpress.org/index.php?l=product_detail&p=229



Balagoon Boxing Club - Zine which details the experience of building a training program in Philadelphia <https://itsgoingdown.org/new-zine-on-balagoon-boxing-club-in-philadelphia/>



Go Kits For Anti-Fascist Community Defense – A zine that teaches what materials you will need to rapidly respond to threats in your community along with how to store, organize, and deploy them. <https://1312press.noblogs.org/files/2021/12/GoKitsforAntiFascistCommunityDefense.pdf>



What makes me the foremost expert on this subject? The answer is simple: Twitter clout. Just kidding. However, I do have plenty of knowledge to pass on. I am an avid martial artist who has a combined 16+ years of experience in Wrestling, Muay Thai, Jiu-Jitsu, Boxing, and MMA and have competed at the amateur level. I have put my training to use with de-escalation and safety work, direct actions at summits, bar brawls, directly confronting fascist mobilizations, jailhouse fights, and [REDACTED]. I have also taught a variety of martial arts and community defense classes here in the Pacific Northwest. These have ranged from one-off empowerment seminars, de-escalation trainings, combat sport instruction, traditional self-defense classes, de-escalation trainings, queer centered defense courses, cornering fighters during competitions, and specialized training for anti-fascist crews. Currently, I am an instructor for a long-term martial arts and community defense training program. It is my hope to pass on my knowledge and experience to you so that you can pass it on to others. Through our collective effort we *will* keep us safe.

If you haven't already, you will need to read my first zine titled Training Martial Arts for Anti-Fascism before continuing. In this zine I have already gone over my thoughts on what is needed to train for anti-fascist community defense including what styles are effective and how to train them for real world application. Once we understand how we need to train we can better understand how we can better teach others. That zine will help guide our understanding of martial arts and the general concepts which will be expanded upon in this zine.

You can find an imposed version of the zine suitable for printing here: <https://archive.org/details/training-martial-arts-for-anti-fascism-imposed>



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Additional Reading

Training Martial Arts for Anti-Fascism - My first zine which explores which martial arts are effective for anti-fascism and street actions.

<https://archive.org/details/training-martial-arts-for-anti-fascism-imposed>



Fear is the Mind Killer - Teaching Martial Arts while embracing fear

<https://goodreads.com/book/show/45888571-fear-is-the-mind-killer>



Strong Body, Soft Heart - Understanding and responding to trauma as anti-fascists. [https://itsgoingdown.org/wp-](https://itsgoingdown.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Tough_Mind_Soft_Heart_booklet.pdf)

[content/uploads/2020/05/Tough_Mind_Soft_Heart_booklet.pdf](https://itsgoingdown.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Tough_Mind_Soft_Heart_booklet.pdf)



Antifascist Self-Defense: Reflections From Russia -

https://ia802807.us.archive.org/16/items/ZineArchive/AntifaSelfDefense_imposed.pdf



Resources

Martial Arts Training and Resource Guide: An extensive video library of techniques, training concepts, fitness routines, and sports science to help participants prepare for class and practice the techniques afterwards -

<https://archive.org/details/martial-arts-training-and-resource-guide>



Traction Project Materials and Downloads: Queer and trans centered martial arts training guides, curriculum and teaching guides, self-defense zines, and list of self-defense classes - <https://traction-project.org/downloads/>



Southpaw: Community of leftist martial artists, instructors, and gyms -

<https://www.patreon.com/southpawpod>



Play, Fight, Move: Patreon account (www.patreon.com/playfightmove)

dedicated to teaching martial arts with a focus on grappling.

How to Facilitate

Grappling Curriculum

Coaching First Timers



Section 1:

Laying the Ground Work



Getting Started

The first thing that any program needs is an instructor. Are you an experienced martial artist? Well, congratulations! You're now the first instructor for your city's new Martial Arts and Community Defense Training Program! No, seriously; it's you. I know, I know. You're not a professional fighter or a BJJ black belt. Hell, you're still learning yourself so how can you teach others? Well, you need to put aside your imposter syndrome because your comrades need you. Us martial artists are so used to holding ourselves to the highest standards and surrounding ourselves with badasses that we sometimes forget that the average person has no idea how to fight. Even the fundamentals are enough to give someone the edge in an altercation. Believe it or not, if you have been seriously training functional martial arts for at least several years you are more than qualified to teach these skills at the beginner level. If you have been training for longer you are able to teach more advanced techniques and concepts. Just be honest with yourself and others about your capabilities and knowledge.

The next thing that your program will need are additional instructors. You don't need to wait for this step before getting started, but the sooner you add other instructors to the program the better. Additional instructors help you round out your skill set. Very few people are trained and experienced enough to be experts in both striking and grappling, multiple styles, a wide variety of community-defense scenarios, weapons, etc... Also, different instructors will have different personalities, teaching styles, backgrounds, and demographics which may be preferred by different participants. Additionally, it's impossible to be available to teach every class for the long term. You will have to take time off for vacations, injuries, family emergencies, sickness, etc... The other instructors can cover classes while you're away so you don't have to feel guilty for putting the program on hold. As your program expands you will want to add additional classes to fit the varied schedules and needs of the participants. It will be difficult to do these all yourself. You'll need help.

minor injuries with preferably a private EMT team on site or at least on standby. You also need to protect yourself and your program. Look into getting one-time event insurance to cover any unforeseen circumstances or legal issues.

Fighters are more likely to travel in if housing is made available. Ask your program participants and local comrades to host those traveling in for a few days. This will make the trip more affordable for them, give them a safe and comfortable place to land, help build connections between different teams, and give fighters direct access to local knowledge and resources.

Additionally, while the fights will be the main attraction you will want to make a full weekend of surrounding events. A cookout for the teams will be a great way to welcome them to your town and make them feel at home. It will allow for bonds to be formed and opponents to connect and talk before their fight. Host a self-defense seminar that is open to the public to help teach them needed skills, make them feel more empowered, and recruit them for your program. You can also host seminars to teach the public how to find a suitable gym to train at or martial artists on how to start their own training program. It is important to end the weekend on a fun high note. A big party for the fighters and their teams on the last night will cement the friendships formed over the weekend and will allow everyone to let off steam. Besides, dancing is a great way to work through lingering adrenaline!



hosted by larger, more established programs with a lot of resources. However, it can also be pulled off if you coordinate with the other programs you work with through your force multiplier efforts.

You should showcase a wide variety of styles and skill levels at your fight night. Different rule sets will appeal to different people and highlight the many options one has for training and community defense. The most popular styles seen at recent fight nights are Muay Thai/Kickboxing, Jiu-Jitsu, and Boxing. However, if you get enough requests for it you can also include wrestling, sambo, stick fighting, or other styles. It is also important that you include a variety of skill levels. Experts and pro-level fighters will showcase the beauty of each art form and what we as a community are capable of. More novice fighters will give a more realistic example of what people can expect from training and make it feel more attainable. Many people who have never trained will see novice fighters and think, “I can do that,” which will provide motivation for them to start their own martial arts journey.

With this wide range of skill sets and experience it’s important to make fair and competitive match-ups. Have each fighter self-report their walk around/competition weight, experience level/training duration, competition record, current/expected fitness level, fight goals/comfort level (exhibition? Smoker? Fight?), and any other relevant information so that you can make the most accurate match-ups.

Safety is paramount for these events. Masks should be mandatory for all spectators to prevent the spread of Covid. Fighters should be encouraged to treat the fight as a smoker (which lays in between heavy sparring and amateur competition) to limit the chances of knockouts or injury. However, unless there is an immediate safety concern you shouldn’t block those who want to make it an actual fight. The referees should be experienced competitors who are experts in the rulesets and familiar with what it takes to keep fighters safe. Medical staff need to be on site to treat

Your program will eventually need organizers. Teaching classes takes time and effort. Your focus should be on developing a curriculum and continuing your own training to maintain and sharpen your skills so that you can better pass them on to others. Organizers are needed to help recruit participants, fundraise for gear and equipment, administer group chats, interface with participants, form program infrastructure and procedures, mediate internal disputes, apply for grants, etc... In addition to sharing the load to prevent burnout, organizers help to break down hierarchies within the program. If every organizer is also an instructor then a divide can form between the instructors and participants. Having organizers who aren’t instructors can give you unique perspectives you haven’t thought of, give participants an active role in the success of the project, and bring other skills and experiences to the table. Remember, not everyone is a jack of all trades and with a diverse group you won’t have to be. What if you’re reading this and are more of an organizer than an instructor? Well, go find a comrade who is instructor material and get started together!

As said before, you don’t need additional organizers or instructors at the very beginning. Get started using the resources you have available without delay. As people start to train and you get to know each other you’ll find suitable instructors and organizers. Start slowly at first and add more as the work increases. Make sure to foster a healthy group dynamic where everyone has an equal say in what they teach and the direction the project is taking.



Establishing Goals

In order to create an effective training program you must first establish what your goals are. Brainstorm with the other's and ask... What are the defense needs of the community? What are the threats? What skills would be the most useful against these threats? Who are we trying to serve? What would a successful program look like? How would you measure that success? After this is determined you can best choose how to respond to those needs and confront those threats. Are you looking to teach anti-fascists how to directly confront the far-right? If so, you will need to focus the training on mental conditioning, aggressive styles, weapon defense, and dirty techniques. Are these anti-fascists expecting mass engagements? Then you will need to have greater focus on multiple attackers and group scenarios. Are they expecting to go on the offensive to catch fascists off guard? Then you will want to incorporate teamwork exercises and have a more closed attendance policy. Are you looking to teach safety teams how to protect events, rallies, and marches? Then you will want to have a greater emphasis on de-escalation, "bouncer" restraints, how to spot threats, moving in groups, etc... Are your participants looking to feel more confident and empowered? You should teach them how to stand their ground, use their voice, basic defense, etc... Are women/non-men, queers, and BIPOC individuals worried about targeted harassment or violence? You may want to focus on de-escalation, situational awareness, pepper spray deployment, bystander intervention, etc...

One of your central goals must always be to train in a realistic manner using effective martial arts that can be applied against attacking/resisting opponents in a variety of scenarios. This is a tall order that will require your participants to push themselves and each other. Avoid diluting your teachings in ways that will ill prepare your communities for actual conflicts or give them a false sense of confidence. Your instruction also needs to be suitable for all levels so that beginners can feel comfortable

Competition

As more and more programs are built and more comrades on the Left train there will be a need to put our skills to the test through competition. Participants should be encouraged to compete when the opportunity arises. Competition helps participants take their skills to the next level by motivating them to get in peak shape and spend extra time outside of class to sharpen their skills. It is also a great form of mental conditioning. Competition can take many forms. These include smokers, amateur/professional fights, jiu-jitsu tournaments, etc... Fight camps take considerable discipline that will translate to their future training as well as their organizing. Fight discipline leads to revolutionary discipline. Fights are also very stressful and, at times, scary. Experiencing this can help participants deal with stress in day-to-day life and in the lead up to actions. Competition fights are the closest we can get to actual fights and, alongside sparring, are the best way to prepare. This will help them remain calm when in actual combat. Participants competing also benefit other program participants. Many wish to train harder or take fights of their own after seeing their teammates compete. It can also bring everyone closer together after sharing the experience of helping each other prepare and then witnessing the fruits of their collective labor. This is why it's so important to encourage other participants to attend the fight.

Once you have made enough connections to other programs you can even organize your own events. Over the past several years leftist, anti-fascist, and queer fight nights have become more common. Oftentimes, fighters and teams travel from across the country to test themselves and contribute to building a fighting culture. The goal of these events is to make connections, inspire spectators, empower individuals and communities, educate the masses on our militant history, and dispel the myth that martial arts is only for the Right or inherently rooted in machismo. They are vital to building a healthy martial arts culture on the Left. These events are usually

they're in town visiting. Once their program is fully operational you can then team up to help additional programs get off the ground.

This coordination will help establish friendships and comradery beyond martial arts that will extend across entire regions and bridge local cultural divides. This will lead to greater cooperation in other organizing projects and a culture of both mutual aid and mutual defense.



and experts stimulated. As you expand the program you can add beginner/advanced specific classes if they are needed.

One of your short-term goals should be to prepare your participants to train in other martial arts spaces. Gyms can be an intimidating environment to step into. Teach classes in a manner where participants have the basic building blocks that can be applied in MMA gyms. This way they can join with more confidence and hit the mats running. They can also continue training if they move or your program eventually ends.

One possible long-term goal is to grow your program so that it provides all the martial arts resources your community requires. This may include having multiple classes on different days each week or a permanent indoor space. These classes should have a variety of martial arts disciplines such as separate classes for striking, grappling, demographic-specific training (women/non-men, BIPOC, queer, etc...), strength and conditioning, classes that focus on drilling the technical fundamentals, as well as ones that show how to apply these techniques to specific community defense scenarios.

Another long-term goal should be to shift the martial arts culture in your area towards something that is more liberatory and inclusive. This is, of course, easier said than done, but as your participants enter other gyms and spaces they will bring their mentalities and training style with them. If there is a large enough influx they can help to shift the culture over time.

Keep your goals in mind as they will help guide how you structure the classes, your attendance model, and the training offered. They may also shift over time depending on your participants' needs and the political climate.



Creating the Culture

Culture is the most important aspect of your program. If you do everything else in this zine but neglect the culture then you are just recreating the models and gyms that already exist. You might as well save yourself the time and invite your comrades to train with you at your current gym. However, if you cultivate a unique, healthy, and vibrant culture within your program you can create something that is sorely missing from your community. This culture will dictate how your participants learn, who feels welcome, how the program will connect to other projects, if it will outlast you or other instructors, etc... Establishing this culture from the onset needs to be your greatest priority because it will quickly become entrenched, for better or worse, and will be difficult to alter later down the line.

Political Culture

Remember, this is a martial arts program. Not everyone who attends is going to be a theory nerd. We need bruisers and thinkers in our movements and some people will not be both. The expected politics that you hold your participants to will not be the same expectations that you would hold people who join a political org or tight knit crew. With that said, there needs to be basic standards without demanding political purity.

The program should have leftist politics at its core. There are plenty of right-wing and “apolitical” gyms out there. Now is the time for leftist martial arts. As will be discussed in later sections, there may be scenarios and training spaces where you will have to fly under the radar or play your cards right, even then, there needs to be leftism as the program’s superstructure even when it’s not explicitly visible.

In order to create a large and vibrant leftist training program there needs to be left unity. What that standard looks like will depend on your community and current political situation. However, you also do not

Becoming a Force Multiplier

If you are able to establish a successful martial arts and community defense program in your own city then you will have accomplished something incredible. Seriously, you should be very proud of yourself and everyone involved. However, there is no way for you or your participants alone to protect everyone. You must give others the skills to protect themselves. In order to do this you need to use the program and your experiences to help others start their own program. They in turn will train others and help more programs get off the ground which will, hopefully, lead to exponential growth. We are more than just martial artists; we are force multipliers.

Start making connections with other martial artists and leftists in your region. Whether you meet at smokers, actions, conferences, tournaments, or shows it is important to emphasize how your program has impacted your community and how it could benefit theirs. Exchange contacts and follow up with them to see if they’re still interested in starting something of their own. If they are then arrange a phone call or, better yet, travel to their town to discuss it in person. Provide them with resources such as this zine and other writings, videos, or lesson plans that were helpful to you. Help them troubleshoot issues they’re running into and see if you can come up with solutions together. Offer to come teach a class to get the ball rolling and let them see how you put these concepts into practice. You should also check back in with them regularly to make sure they don’t lose momentum and falter. Most of all, offer general support and encouragement.

From there you can start coordinating with other established programs. Instructors can travel to be a guest teacher and offer their expertise in a subject or just to shake things up. Several smaller programs can get together in order to practice group scenarios or other trainings that require more participants. Participants can join another cities’ class when

Section 4:

Expansion and Connections



want to broaden your definition of “left” so much that it loses all meaning. If this happens then your program will be liberalized to the point that it is unrecognizable. You may conversely be tempted to create a program that caters solely to anarchists, communists, or a specific political sect. However, this is a bad idea unless you are building a closed model program for a specific org. Left unity will help your program grow larger and give teeth to the broader community. It will help different sects learn to work together when it makes sense. Furthermore, you will one day need these others to come to your aid when you’re in need and you do not want them to be untrained when they do so. Of course there may be groups who’s specific politics or past actions violate the points of unity for the program or who claim to be leftists while not actually holding leftist politics. You’ll have to approach these cases individually as they come about.

If you hold leftist politics to be at the core of the program then you will also be holding anti-oppression politics at the core. This includes, but is not limited to, an explicit stance against racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, etc... If you do not take this stance then the people who need the training the most will not feel comfortable or safe attending. One of the best ways to establish this is by having a diverse set of instructors and organizers including women/non-men, BIPOC, queer/trans, neurodivergent, etc. If you only have white, straight, men teaching and organizing then these issues are more likely to materialize and/or go unnoticed even with the best intentions. Additionally, the people who belong to specific communities are the ones who are best equipped with the specific knowledge on how to keep themselves and those communities safe.

A culture of safety is also vital. This means that individuals that pose a direct risk to other participants cannot be tolerated. Examples include snitches and abusers. Snitches will put themselves above others and could entrap less experienced activists looking to prove themselves in militant spaces. Abusers will hurt and manipulate participants in a space that requires trust and respect. Types of abuse that should never be tolerated are credible allegations of physical or sexual violence, predatory behavior, or serial abuse

with longterm patterns. There may be instances where there are gray areas or lack of certainty, cases of accidental harm, the passage of significant time, transformative justice work, etc... where a person isn't considered a danger, but may have done harm in the past. If you do choose to allow them to train it must be under vigilant observation, but they should be kept away from any instructional/organizational roles. Instructors must be held to a higher standard beyond just their fighting ability as it's the ultimate position of trust with in the program.

Group Culture

Group culture exists as an extension of, yet parallel to, political culture. It is the norms, etiquette, support structures, communication styles, and relationships that develop within any group. This type of culture is important to cultivate early on.

Part of the way you can do this is by starting with a core group and engaging in controlled growth. As stated above, the culture you start with is likely to be what persists. Start with individuals, groups, and advertising methods that will draw participants who are most politically and socially sound, stable, and welcoming. They should be friendly and inviting, confident but not intimidating, lack an ego, accepting of instruction and criticism, etc... This will cement these attributes as the norm and attract similarly minded people to the program. Once this is established you can start to expand. As time goes by and the culture is firmly entrenched you can be more relaxed and start to add more participants at a time, have more open recruiting, or engage with groups that have outlying views. Just make sure your program isn't overwhelmed by a sudden influx of people who could radically shift the nature of the program.

Group chats are a great way to establish a group culture. It makes the space less intimidating and fosters community. These chats should be created on an encrypted platform that offers a degree of safety/anonymity and allows for people to be added in accordance with the attendance policy.

week then their progress will be slow and will eventually plateau. This is where MMA and other martial arts gyms come into play. Research local gyms for their effective techniques and welcoming cultures and come up with a list of the best ones for your participants. You can even pick a single one and encourage everyone to join. This way participants will see their friends when they go and will develop deeper training bonds. These gyms will teach skills that your classes do not and these participants will then bring them back to class to share with others. They can also focus on their technique in the gym and situational application in class.

If enough participants are interested then you can inquire about group rates. Many gyms offer family plans that aren't limited to blood/legal relations or having the same address. A handful can band together and do this on their own. If it gets beyond a handful and you find a gym that you've developed a good relationship with and who are sympathetic to your cause then you can inquire about a group rate for the entire program. This will give the gym more business, open up the door for low income participants to train more, and, if strategic, allow your program to positively influence the culture of the gym and the wider martial arts community.

You should also encourage your participants to engage in more sports and other physical activities. Look up intramural sports leagues they can join such as rugby or soccer, classes at local community centers, hiking/outdoor clubs, parkour, climbing gyms, yoga studios, cycling teams, etc... This will help foster a culture of fitness in your participants and the broader leftist community. It is also important to encourage your participants to develop other community defense skills beyond martial arts. Point them towards groups teaching firearms training, medical aid, radio communication, legal observation, scouting, research, etc.. Remember, we can't punch our way out of every problem. True safety comes from a well rounded and well prepared community.

Supplemental Training

Unless your program has multiple classes per week, a conditioning program, and/or a permanent space with all the necessary gear then the trainings you offer will not be enough for your participants to fully prepare for combat. This is why supplemental training is important.

Even with the physical conditioning portions of the class your participants will need to workout on their own time to reach their fullest potential. Additionally, the more they workout on their own time the more time you can dedicate to teaching technique. Come up with a simple routine for folks to follow outside of class. These exercises should promote power, balance, explosiveness, flexibility/dexterity, and endurance. At home workouts will be the easiest for people to commit to, but weight lifting should also be encouraged. Make sure to regularly post workout videos to the group chat so that people can find new ideas and be inspired. Cardio should also be emphasized as it is often the deciding factor in fights. Endurance cardio is hard to fit into the conditioning portion of classes so should be done outside it. HIIT cardio is also vital for combat and should also be encouraged. Road work (running) is the best form of cardio as it is the means we will most likely use to get to and away from a conflict. This trains the cardio and muscles specific for this vital skill. Long distance jogs should be alternated with interval (HIIT) runs. A simple version of an interval run is for someone to walk for a block, jog for a block, sprint for a block, jog for a block, walk for a block and then repeat until failure. With this said, running isn't the only form of cardio one can engage in and isn't suitable for those with bad knees or other physical concerns. In these cases you should encourage other options such as swimming, biking, climbing stairs, shadow boxing, etc...

Martial arts takes significant time and practice to master and you may not be able to offer enough classes for this. If folks only train once a

I prefer Signal for this. This chat can be used to announce training sessions, needs for the classes, changes in schedules, etc... Additionally, it can be used to create a culture and community surrounding martial arts within the Left. Participants can share fitness advice, fight videos, training questions, martial arts memes, etc... in order to foster this culture and make it part of the participants' day-to-day lives. With that said, it is important to keep the chat centered around program announcements and convos/materials directly related to martial arts, fitness, and community defense. This way, important messages aren't missed and the group doesn't lose focus. Besides, there may already a million different chats for the broader community, we need one for us.

Another way to build group culture is through social activities. One thing that has been particularly successful for our program is hanging out after training. These take place after each class and serve as a space for us to share food and drinks while getting to know each other. These post training socials strengthen group bonds, build trust and understanding between training partners, and allow us to collectively process adrenaline and past trauma after particularly stressful sessions. It also motivates folks to attend classes as many of them have told us they didn't feel like training that day, but didn't want to skip the hangout afterward. Bars are a great option, but can drive away minors or sober folks so you may want to consider a sit-down restaurant with a variety of options (including vegan, gluten free, non-alcoholic, etc...). Other possible social activities include pick-up games of sports, fight viewing parties, cookouts, checking out a new gym together, etc...

Lastly, we want to make sure that the group culture includes a healthy security culture. Militant leftist activities are likely to draw the attention of state security forces even if no one is doing anything illegal. Stress to participants to have the appropriate level of caution and to avoid saying things that could draw heat. Also, the program may not be the appropriate place to openly recruit for riskier groups or actions (especially if the attendance policy is more open). Remind participants that everyone

should move at the speed of trust which is built upon strong personal relationships and vouches from mutual comrades, not just on the ability to punch hard.

Training Culture

You will also want to extend the cultural considerations to the training itself. The training needs to take a healthy approach to martial arts that builds the participant into a better version of themselves beyond just fighting and fitness. It should instill confidence, compassion, and the ability to build new and beautiful things, not just destroy.

The main way of doing this is by steering away from traditional self-defense drills and rhetoric and towards community defense. Self-defense focuses on the protection of one's self and personal property. It is an isolating and individualistic approach to defense that centers a mythical lone hero who is pitted against the entire world. This is an incredibly unhealthy mindset. Instead, we need to focus on community defense which takes into account our place in broader society and our collective responsibilities. It values what we can give to the world and what it provides to us, not just what it can take away. It incorporates bystander intervention, de-escalation, disruption of harassment, mental health care, etc... Community defense acknowledges that we may not just be defending ourselves against some faceless villain in a dark alley, we may be involved in conflicts with our neighbors, friends, co-workers, comrades, and others who we'll continue to interact with. In many of these cases physical intervention, let alone violence, may not be appropriate.

Conversely, community defense means that we'll be purposely engaging in scenarios that traditional self-defense would have us walk away from. Many self-defense teachings are from the perspective of white, cis/het, middle-class, males whose idea of danger is a robbery or a drunken misunderstanding. They often can just walk away while the rest of us do not have that luxury. Our conflicts are not just about what's in our wallets or a

Below is a potential schedule for a program that has 1 class a week

Week 1: Stance, guard, footwork, range management, movement, avoidance, etc...

Week 2: Boxing Offense (jab, cross, hook, uppercut, liver shot, focus mitt drills)

Week 3: Boxing Defense (blocks, parrys, head movement, step backs, no flinch drills)

Week 4: Integrated Boxing (counters/returns, live drills for offense/defense, sparring)

Week 5: Takedown defense (headlocks, sprawls, cross face, throws)

Week 6: Ground defense (shrimping, guard, technical standups, low single)

Week 7: Restraints (wrist grabs, grabs/takedowns from behind, giftwraps)

Week 8: Clinch (Muay Thai vs Wrestling, frames, knees, elbows)

Week 9: Safety Work (de-escalation, sucker punch defense/offense, burst sparring)

Week 10: Close quarters (clinch, dirty boxing, phone booth sparring)

Week 11: "Dirty" Fighting (eye gouges, headbutts, groin shots, oblique kicks)

Week 12: Kicks (teeps, leg kicks, dutch style drills, sparring)

Week 13: Multiple attackers (avoidance, lining up with footwork/clinch, misdirection, live drill)

Week 14: Teamwork (Surround, restrain, takedown, overwhelm)

Week 15: Group Scenarios 1 (Situational awareness, isolating individuals, chaos spar)

Week 16: Group Scenarios 2 (holding/breaking lines, unit tactics, team spar)

Weapons Training

Unlike combat sports, community defense often involves the use of weapons such as knives, bats/batons/flags, chemical irritants, and guns. This is why it's important to train both how to defend against them as well as how to use them if need be. Avoid overly flashy, complicated techniques that promise magical solutions. Weapon combat never looks like this in real life. Instead, emphasize simple, brutal techniques. Some styles that excel at this are military combat systems such as Krav Maga and kali/eskrima. Practice range management, closing the distance, weapon retention, disarms, targeting the vitals, etc... You should also practice mace deployment or the use of improvised weapons and objects in your environment.

Curriculum

It is important to develop a curriculum. Classes should build off of each other in a way that allows participants to form connections to previous lessons. However, they should simultaneously be stand alone and allow participants to jump in without having attended the previous class. You can have each class delve into a new topic that is still related to the previous class or set aside a whole month to work on a specific subject. The classes should be varied enough to be stimulating and eventually cover all the techniques and scenarios while also being repetitive enough to develop muscle memory and mastery of the skills. You should state your goals for each class at the start of it. Connect the techniques to previous ones, common scenarios, and practical applications.

If you have multiple classes a week you can dedicate one to technical drilling and the other to application in scenarios, some for different styles of striking and one for grappling, have sparring or conditioning specific classes, beginner and advance, ones specifically for queer, Women/non-men, BIPOC, etc... If the various teachers coordinate then they can make sure they're teaching related and complementary materials so that your students can form connections between the material and get the repetition needed to master their craft.

spilled beer, it's about who we are as human beings and how this world sees us. That is something we can't walk away from. There is also the need for pre-emptive community defense. With the rise of fascism there are elements that are growing and preparing to attack our communities. It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when. We need to be mentally and physically prepared to pre-emptively take out these threats on our own terms while they are still manageable. This differs drastically from traditional self-defense that would preach either avoiding the conflict or honorably engaging on equal footing. Remember, honor is why we fight, not how.

We must also prepare each other for a world beyond police. These skills and cultural norms do not just snap into place one unspecified day in the distant future, they need to be practiced in our day-to-day lives. Our classes need to fit into this model and prepare each other to protect themselves and others in ways that reflect our politics and desire for a liberated world. Teach your participants to not rely on the police to protect their community. As they become more trained they will become the one who comes to the aid of others who in turn will return that aid.

Changing how we train martial arts means changing how we teach it. Instruction needs to reflect the values and goals previously discussed. We as instructors must be gentle, understanding, and kind. Iron may sharpen iron, but it also breaks it. We need to treat each other how we would like to be treated and how we would like to see them treat others. Just as we expect our participants to adapt to our teaching styles we as instructors must adapt to their learning styles. It's a two way street where mutual respect leads to mutual understanding. Allow for a fluidity in instruction, learning, and adoption of techniques.

Part of this includes breaking down unnecessary hierarchies. Yes, there absolutely needs to be a level of expertise when teaching martial arts. Instructors should not be teaching beyond their level of expertise or be practitioners of ineffective martial arts. This is not gate keeping, this is having standards. One should trust the knowledge and experience of those

who study the skill. However, instructors are not infallible. We martial artists have seen enough diluted techniques, bullshito, unearned confidence, McDojo's, mysticism, and martial arts cults that we are rightfully wary of anyone who says they shouldn't be questioned. Questions absolutely should be encouraged so long as they are productive and in good faith. Questions break down unnecessary hierarchies and prevent bullshit artists from taking hold. It is important that we acknowledge that we do not have all the answers and are always learning ourselves. We must admit when we're wrong and change our methods when need be. You should also encourage critiques and feedback whether openly or in private. At the end of class ask "Did people learn what was intended for today?", "Is there anything we can improve on or something different you would like to see when we train this subject again?", "What do you feel wasn't clear or effective?". This will help keep open and honest lines of communication among participants and instructors as well as improve your instruction.

The classes need to be fun and personal. The more participants and instructors enjoy themselves the more likely they are to continue long term. There should be room for laughter, jokes, silliness, compassion, understanding, and empathy while still maintaining discipline and taking the material seriously.

Trauma informed care is vital for any community defense program. The communities we are serving often have a history of trauma which can be a barrier to training. However, the right approach can assist the participant in overcoming it. A large part of this entails having a healthy culture of consent and boundaries. Everyone in the class should regularly establish consent, especially when working together for the first time or training a new technique. Ask, "is it OK if I ____?" before making contact with another person. Ask for volunteers to help demonstrate a technique, don't just pick one. There should never be any shame if someone isn't comfortable with a particular technique or drill. Teach your participants to recognize the signs of a trauma response such as freezing, fawning, or sudden escalations. Participants should regularly check in with their training partners to see

and overwhelming your opponent during quick engagements which is more common in community defense, but rare in combat sports. Participants will need to tone down their power for phone booth/burst sparring as there will be more strikes landed.

Sparring is also vital for training multiple attackers, teamwork, and group scenarios and should be a major part of those classes. You can also combine burst sparring and group scenarios in order to drill for short, intense, chaotic scenarios such as a brawl suddenly breaking out. You can shuffle your participants by having them walk around randomly and then on que engage the nearest person for 30 seconds before breaking off and re-shuffling. Encourage each person to occasionally try and surprise their intended target with sucker punches or attacks from behind. This will prepare them for unpredictable and ever changing environments.

Mental conditioning can also be incorporated into grappling rolls. Have a single person stand in the middle of the other participants and then defend against takedowns which can come from either in front or behind. Have partners rolling with each other and then randomly throw an object into the mix with the goal being to hold and control the object. This simulates a weapon suddenly coming into play and needing to disarm your opponent and retain it for your own use. You can also play games where a team has to hold on to their objects (a tennis ball for example) and pass them back and forth while trying to steal the other team's objects. This will help promote teamwork and develop situational awareness..

As your program expands and you start holding multiple classes a week you can add sparring and physical conditioning specific classes into the curriculum.



The most important type of conditioning you can perform is sparring and live drills against actively resisting partners. This will prepare your participants by engaging in actual fighting in the safest way possible. Sparring will work both their mental and physical conditioning while allowing them to apply the techniques they've been training. They will also learn what works for their style and body type. Every class should have some variation of this towards the end. While there are times and places to engage in heavy sparring (experienced partners, at key parts of a fight camp, to overcome a mental hurdle, etc...) this should be avoided for community defense classes. Instead focus on light, technical sparring and playful scenarios. This will protect your participants against long term health consequences such as CTE, keep it accessible for beginner participants, and help those with past traumas work through their triggers. With that said, sparring shouldn't be so light and playful that participants aren't prepared for intense confrontations. While the exception, there will be the occasional bloody nose or black eye; just no concussions or broken ribs. Most of your classes should end with 10 - 15 minutes of sparring or live drills against resisting partners utilizing the techniques you have trained that day.

Some of your sparring will look like the standard that is found at most gyms complete with 2 - 3 minute rounds in a specific style and rule set. These sessions will help with their technique, strategy, and adaptability. However, there are plenty of other sparring scenarios that most gyms do not train, but you should. One of my favorites is phone booth sparring. Phone booth sparring is when the partners stay close together and are not allowed to disengage or use their footwork. This simulates close quarters combat, hence "fighting in a phone booth". One way to do this is by drawing a 2.5' circle that each person will need to keep their lead foot in (you can also use hula hoops or bike tires). They can circle each other or lean back, but cannot step out. This will get your participants comfortable with staying in the pocket and standing their ground. Another type of sparring you should do is burst sparring. Burst sparring is when there is an incredibly short round (15 - 30 seconds) and the partners try to land as many strikes as possible with the emphasis being on speed and volume. This simulates taking the initiative

how they are doing and stop a drill if they see any of the said trauma responses. If need be, they should adjust the speed or intensity until their partner is able to better handle it. It is important to create a culture where participants can freely express their fears, walk away when they need to, and alter the pace without judgement.

With that said, the instruction should also strive for real world preparedness. Too often leftist programs hold back in hopes of greater accessibility. While this is great for beginner classes, if you do not include live drills, stress testing, and physical/mental conditioning then you are not preparing your participants for even transitioning to a gym, let alone dangerous scenarios. We must push our own and each other's comfort levels to achieve the next level. This can be accomplished by adding physical conditioning to each class that will get everyone into fighting shape. Participants should encourage each other to dig deep and push harder. Drills need to be done in a realistic manner that mirrors what the scenarios actually look like in order to foster mental conditioning. Technical sparring/rolling should be commonplace. Of course, care should be taken to prevent concussions and injuries. However, participants will get the occasional black eye, sore rib, bloody nose, or scraped knee. It will be scary and painful at times, but that is the only way to become comfortable in scary and painful situations going forward.

This is why we use the phrase, "We must respect boundaries while pushing comfort levels" in our program. It holds both as being equally important and complimentary, not contradictory.



Centering Accessibility

The main reason more leftists don't train martial arts is accessibility. Most gyms are not affordable, comfortable, or safe. If your program isn't accessible to the widest amount of people then it will never reach its fullest potential.

If possible, your classes should be free. Many leftists struggle financially and some marginalized communities have incomes significantly below average. Ask coaches to donate their time and find a spot you can use for free such as a park or activist oriented community center. Make the required gear more accessible by asking participants to donate their spare gloves and other gear for communal use. Pool together funds and buy mouthguards to give out to new, low-income participants. The cheaper you can make it for people to join the more will attend.

The culture at many gyms and in martial arts in general is extremely toxic and laden with misogyny, homo/transphobia, ableism, and general right-wing scum'ery. For your participants to feel comfortable in your training program you will need to establish a healthy culture that combats this from the very onset.

Not everyone has access to a personal mode of transportation. This is why your training location must be as centrally located as possible and near major roads. Try to find a spot that is close to bus routes and other forms of public transportation. Shorter commute times will make classes more accessible to workers, students, and parents with limited free time.

Everyone has a different work and school schedule. Unfortunately, this means that the day(s) and times won't work for everyone. Instructors should come up with options of days and times that they are able to teach. The participants can then vote for all the options that work for them with the

sprints, and end with push-ups, squats, and abs exercises. The classes should also end with a 5 - 10 minute conditioning portion that combines strength training and cardio to push participants to their limits. Exercises can include a combination of sprints, push-ups, burpees, core exercises, crawls, jumps/squats, and various partner exercises. Vary the exercises each week to target each muscle group and type of cardio in slightly different ways.

Power and explosiveness are vital for community defense and allows us to deal the greatest amount of damage in the shortest amount of time. This can be achieved by incorporating plyometric exercises (explosive movements that work fast twitch muscles). Options include clapping push-ups, heavy bag/Thai pad work, jump squats, sprints, medicine ball throws/slams, etc... Endurance exercises prepare participants for longer training sessions, day-long actions, and combat sports. You can train this by having long, repetitive pad work rounds with tons of volume. Options include alternating between the straights/hooks/uppercuts at ten reps apiece (10/10/10) for an extended period, 30 kicks each side, a short group run to end class, etc...

High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) is also incredibly important. HIIT is when the exercise repeatedly and rapidly alternates between a short burst of extreme output and a short rest period. This forces your body to quickly adapt to the sudden increase in load and then rapidly recover before the next set. HIIT exercises emulate the bursts and pauses found in fights and intense direct actions. A good option is ladder sprints with short breaks. You can combine HIIT, explosiveness, and endurance into a single exercise so that participants can learn to quickly transition between different types of cardio and muscle activity. For example, you can do a 3 minute drill where one participant holds pads and the other hits. It will start with a 30 second 10/10/10 (endurance), sprawl with a push-up and jump squat, 30 seconds of a chained power combo (ex. jab, cross, hook, kick), sprawl with a double sit-out and jump squat, repeat.

accurately and with purpose which will allow us to connect in the chaos of fights. Throwing punches like this also forces the drilling partner to defend in a functional way. They will have to block each strike coming in a way that develops muscle memory. Also, the controlled strikes mean that if one connects the training partner will not be hurt and thus become more accustomed to taking hits without panicking.

Mental conditioning is vital for defense as the fear of getting hit in the face is one of the hardest hurdles to overcome. The best way to train this is progressive no-flinch drills. Start with having your participants standing still with their hands down and allowing their training partner to hit them in their face and body with zero power. Have them focus on remaining calm, breathing steadily, not looking away, and not flinching. Next, have their partner simulate heavy punches *without making contact* complete with screaming and other noises with the goal being to remain calm and collected. Next, have their partners throw soft and slow strikes with their goal being to stand their ground and calmly defend each strike. As they get more comfortable, have their partner start to throw with more speed, volume, and intensity while keeping the power at 0 - 5%. The partner will continue to increase the difficulty while temporarily slowing down when they start to flinch, freeze, or panic. These types of drills build up everyone's comfort level in stressful and dangerous situations. You can also add external factors and distractions to simulate chaotic actions or environments. Flashing lights, movement, loud noises, people talking to them/screaming, etc... can simulate what this could feel like.

Physical conditioning is also very important because fitness in general has been neglected by the Left. Skill and courage are incredibly important, but will only take us so far if we don't have the strength to land a knockout or the cardio to run and fight another day. This is why physical condition should be emphasized in your program. Add some calisthenics and cardio to your group warm ups at the beginning of each class. Start with shadow boxing and then add sprawls, jog in a circle (while doing inside/outside shuffles, butt kickers, high knees, skips, etc...) and then add

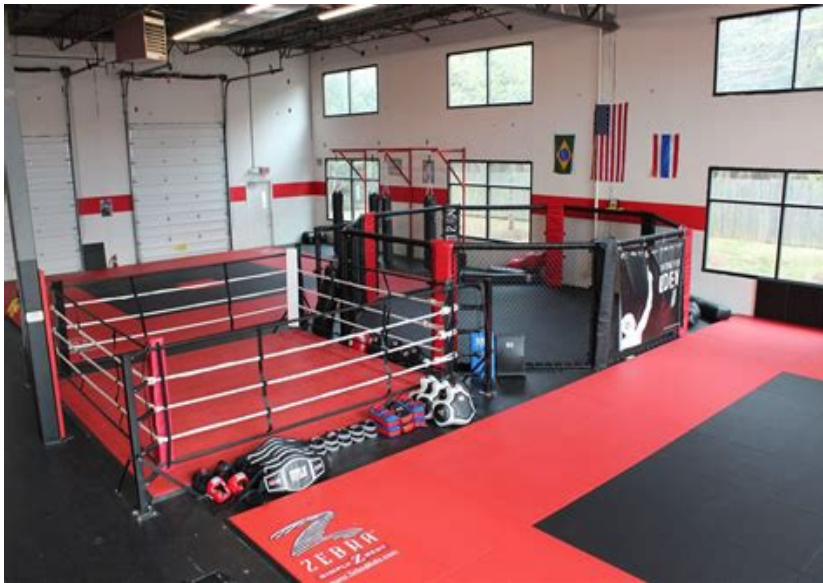
highest voted days/times winning out. This will allow for the largest number of people to attend.

Lastly, we are still in the midst of a pandemic. Though it has gotten better, Covid is still a real concern. Us martial artists have seen firsthand the effect it has had on gyms. We have seen our friends and training partners sidelined from long Covid, sometimes with potentially permanent complications. We have also seen members driven from the gyms due to the lack of even bare minimum safety precautions. This is why Covid safety is so important. Provide participants with information on upcoming vaccination clinics. If possible, training should take place outdoors to lessen risk. Even then, Covid exposure is still possible when working in close quarters. Masks should be made available to participants free of charge. Participants may prefer a mask mandatory policy. If not, I highly recommend at least having a policy where masks are required if a training partner requests it. In these cases, both partners will wear masks while working together. If neither partner requires a mask then they can choose to not wear them. However, masks would be required for everyone during group activities. This way different people with different risk levels can still train together. If you are training indoors then I highly recommended making it mandatory. If masks are just optional then your trainings are not accessible to all. Additional steps can be taken to make indoor training safer. Open up windows and doors for extra ventilation and/or purchase Covid rated air purifiers.



Section 2:

Building the Infrastructure



who are overconfident due to bravado or substance use. Have your participants practice surrounding the attacker and cutting off their movement, engaging from behind with punches, slams, and restraints, and either forcing them out of the area or overwhelming them. Lastly, build off of your teamwork lessons and train group scenarios. These scenarios are also frowned upon by self-defense instructors as they're seen as anti-social behavior instead of righteous community defense. Train how to move as both a large group and smaller units, maximize the front line (surface area) while maintaining deep ranks, practice isolating individuals, flanking maneuvers, pulling individuals into your ranks, boot parties, feigned retreats, etc... You can even team up with other community defense programs to maximize numbers. Besides, who doesn't like a good ol' fashioned rumble in the park?

Conditioning

Mental and physical conditioning is an incredibly important aspect of any community defense program. Fights are scary and physically taxing and we need to be as prepared as possible. If you don't spend significant time on conditioning then your participants will be more likely to freeze, experience adrenaline dumps, tire quickly, or panic. The better we can recreate these conditions in class the better we will perform under pressure.

Metal conditioning allows us to have a realistic expectation and practical experience with fight scenarios. This is something that is strangely absent from most martial arts training besides the competition level. The easiest way to gain mental conditioning is to drill in more realistic manners. This doesn't mean that we always go 100%. For example, too often training partners will hold up their hands as if they were pads while drilling striking combos. Pad holding is pad holding while drills are drills and combining the two just gives us the worst of each. This means that during drills we aim our strikes at the chin, temple, liver, and other targets instead of pulling our punches or aiming at the gloves or the forehead. Of course, we are still throwing with control and respect. This trains our mind to throw more

put their theater kid skills to good use. Have drills where they have to transition between the different levels of escalation by responding to instructions or the cues of their training partner. These scenarios are great for programs that prepare for safety work. You should also teach live drills that mimic scenarios found in direct actions such as holding a line, de-arresting, evading a pursuer, navigating obstacles (fences, walls, etc...), pushing in mass, etc... which are absolutely vital skills for leftists to have.

Combat sports prepare fighters for strict, known start and stop times. We do not have these luxuries and many fights start suddenly and with little warning. This is why it is important to train sucker punches and other surprise attacks. Train scenarios where your participants have to look out for the warning signs of a sucker punch and respond accordingly. Practice trying to de-escalate multiple people while preventing them from surrounding or cutting you off from others. Train scenarios with sudden, extreme escalations. Similarly, you should teach your participants how to throw sucker punches and engage in other surprise attacks. Teach how to throw a proper punch from behind, how to set up distractions, how to sneak up for a rear naked choke, etc... This is how community defense differs from traditional self defense because sometimes throwing the first punch or attacking from behind is the ethical and necessary choice.

When engaging in community defense we are likely to encounter multiple attackers. These scenarios are scary and extremely dangerous which is why it's important to train them. Have participants practice surviving these encounters by using footwork and the clinch to line up attackers, sucker punches and misdirection to get the drop on the attackers, and movement and exit strategies to escape. Start with one of these techniques and then add others throughout class until you finish with live drills. You can build off your multiple attackers drills and develop counters to them by working on teamwork. Teamwork drills are often neglected by traditional self-defense because it assumes that the side who has the most people is the aggressor and thus in the wrong. However, we know that isn't always the case especially when it comes to safety work or against attackers

Choosing an Attendance Model

Your attendance model will dictate who will be able to join your classes and how you promote them. What model you choose will depend on your unique local circumstances. Each has potential benefits and risks. It is important to think it over and choose the one that makes sense for you.

Open

An open attendance model is one where anyone can join without any prerequisite or vouching. Under this model the program would be promoted via word of mouth, physical flyers in spaces that serve your target demographic (such as leftist/mutual aid centers, friendly bars/concert venues, queer resource centers, neighborhood/cultural center points, etc...), by sending emails to local orgs, talking to crews around town, and/or social media. This type of policy could be better suited for towns that have a less connected leftist community and/or those with fewer threats from the far-right or state repression. It can also work for demographic exclusive classes such as women/non-men, queer, or BIPOC.

The main benefit to this model is that word will reach more people and boost attendance. It will connect previously separate groups and isolated individuals and help build a stronger community through a shared activity. Also, crews that are more secretive and face higher risks can blend in and fly under the radar if there are enough participants. Sometimes hiding in plain sight is safer.

However, it does have potential risks. By inviting the entire leftist community you will have less control over who attends. Some of the attendees may have a disruptive effect on the program (whether on purpose or not) by not taking it seriously and causing distractions or initiating personal conflicts with others. It is also harder to shape and maintain the culture of the program if a large number of people who's attitudes are at odds

with the collective vision suddenly join, especially at the very beginning. Liberals and others who erroneously think they are leftists can dilute the politics of the program and steer it towards their pacifist values. Men who do not have their machismo in check can drive out women and queers with their misogyny. Lastly, open models are at greater risk from rightwing disruption and state repression.

Saying this is not to discourage open attendance models; just to give instructors and organizers some things to consider so that they can make the best choice. These potential risks may not apply to your community or be less than the risks of doing nothing. At the end of the day, the more leftists and marginalized people who are trained the safer everyone will be.

Closed

A closed attendance model is one where only selected orgs, crews, and individuals can attend the trainings and the program is not public in any way. Under this model the trainings would be requested by said group(s) or you would initiate them with the groups you already have a working relationship with. This type of model may be better suited for groups that perform specialized types of high risk work and/or communities that face threats from the far-right or state repression.

The benefits to this model is that it allows you to cater to the specific needs and scenarios of the select group instead of a generalized curriculum that covers everything. Since the participants are organizing together they already know each other's strengths/weaknesses, learning style, comfort level, quirks, etc... which will allow them to train together more effectively. The types of groups that will benefit from this model are usually already politically educated and possess revolutionary discipline. This means less effort will be needed to build and maintain a healthy culture.

With this said, there are some drawbacks. Drawing from a smaller pool means smaller class sizes. Unless the group(s) are very large or

We should be training skills that aren't normally associated with martial arts and defense. These skills can be used when violence isn't appropriate (mental health crises, low level disruptions) or is ill-advised (outnumbered, unnecessary risk of arrest, optics). Chief among them is verbal de-escalation. This skill is the cornerstone of safety work and is a valuable tool in your toolbox. By having all these tools available you will have many options for a variety of scenarios and levels of escalation.

Scenario Training

When training to compete in combat sports you are training for a very unique and limited scenario. You know exactly when and where the fight will take place, who your opponent is, that it will be one-on-one, the ruleset, etc... This type of training is invaluable and I highly recommend every martial artist taking competition fights if they have the opportunity to do so. However, training for community defense requires training for an infinite number of potential scenarios. While we can't possibly be prepared for everything, we can train for a wide variety of scenarios which will allow us to respond and adapt to new ones.

Many martial arts fail to teach various levels of escalation and how to transition between them. If you only know how to engage with high levels of violence then you are useless for all the other scenarios where it's not warranted. This is why it's important to train the various strategies for various situations. The first level is verbal de-escalation which is best used against trolls/disruptors or when police presence and optics prevent other options. The next level is physical de-escalation/restraints. This is best used when needing to remove someone from a space or when dealing with a mental health crisis. From there it would be fighting which is used when someone is attacking you or has crossed a specific boundary. The last level of escalation is deadly force. This is needed when no other options are available and the lives of you or others are at stake. Come up with drills that put your participants in scenarios where they will have to respond to the threat or issue with the appropriate level of force. Have them act it out and

Lastly, if you have the necessary equipment you should also teach slams, which are even more effective for community defense since they'll likely be on concrete. You should emphasize slams that result in more impact damage and avoid those where you would go to the ground with the opponent. Take note from freestyle wrestling and Judo for these. Overall, focus on getting top control and dominant positions, defense and escapes/scrambles from the bottom, and an overall "sprawl and brawl" strategy.

The Rest

Dirty fighting is extremely important to train. Community defense scenarios do not have defined rule sets meaning that all techniques are appropriate in scenarios where participants are threatened with serious injury or death. This requires us to train techniques that are illegal in combat sports. However, you should also teach reasonable levels of escalation and restraint so that these skills are used appropriately. The main technique to train is eye gouges because they can be applied in a variety of positions and do not require high levels of physical conditioning or training. Lithwei styled headbutts are a game changer when applied to the clinch alongside the eye gouges. Elbows to the spine from the sprawl position are also very effective. You can also train other dirty techniques such as throat or groin strikes so long as you also teach realistic expectations of their effect (or lack thereof) on attackers. The one downside of these techniques is that they are difficult to safely train while sparring or doing live drills which makes them less likely to be committed to muscle memory.

Speaking of muscle memory, no matter what you train it is important to drill and revisit techniques often to solidify this mind/body connection and reflex. It is better to have your participants be experts in just the fundamentals than be novices in a little bit of everything. Practice "repetition without repetition"; that is, practice the same techniques with different variables such as time per round, level of fatigue, varying counters, uses in different scenarios, etc...

incredibly motivated there will most likely be fewer participants attending months in than there was at the beginning. You may find that training just a handful of people isn't worth the time and effort you need to put in. The smaller size can also lead to a lack of diverse training partners. The group may also have a similar level of training, body type, comfort level, etc... While this may seem great, it means that they will lack the necessary experience to deal with threats that differ from their established norms. As martial artists we need to spar with more skilled partners to learn how to survive and less skilled to learn how to finish off an opponent, larger partners to teach us how to close the range and smaller to teach us how to keep someone at bay, and more aggressive partners so that we can push ourselves and more passive so that we can become kinder and more accommodating teammates. Lastly, closed models mean that there are less people getting the training they need.

Hybrid Model

Your program doesn't have to be either completely open or closed, you can choose a hybrid model. This model is a combination of policies from the open and closed models that you can pick and choose to meet your unique needs and circumstances.

This is the model that our program operates under. We do not publicly advertise the classes in any way nor do we have social media. However, the program isn't exclusive to any specific orgs or crews. When we started we messaged allied orgs that we have worked with in the past and individual comrades who we thought would be a good fit. From there we created a secure group chat and added those who were interested. Those who were in the chat were then welcomed to invite anyone who was interested so long as they knew the person in real life, they were a leftist, and felt they would be a positive addition to the program. They would express their desire to invite said comrade to the organizers who would then add that person to the group chat and send them the details on the classes. This method is not perfect or foolproof. However, it does attempt to strike a balance between

the extremes of the closed and open models. Principled and disciplined comrades are more likely than the average person to know and invite other people who share those values. This model is more likely to build the desired culture while also reaching a larger segment of the community. The hybrid model can also be adapted to evolving needs. If your program's culture is fully established and/or you're moving into a permanent space with rent requirements then it makes sense to open it up further. If there's heat or some sort of threat then you may want to temporarily close the books. You may also have some classes which are more open to cater to the general public and others that are closed to train specific demographics or crews.

There is no single model that will work for every community, need, or local circumstances. Find the one that works for you and others even if it takes a few attempts or false starts. Be flexible when need-be while also offering consistency and stability.



Overall, focus on a more aggressive style that emphasizes power punches, volume, and accuracy. Most encounters will be short and brutal so the highly technical, multi-round strategies seen in combat sports should be avoided.

Grappling

While grappling should be less emphasized than striking, you will absolutely need to incorporate it. Taking a fight to the ground is a great strategy for combat sports, interpersonal violence, or some classic self-defense scenarios. However, it is ill advised for community defense where multiple attackers, weapons, or hostile security forces are more likely to be encountered. It is for this reason that we need to focus on defensive grappling. The main technique for this is the sprawl. This should be drilled until it becomes muscle memory for participants as it is key to stopping takedowns and slams. Participants will also need to learn how to defend themselves and escape if they do find themselves on the ground. Avoid an over reliance on a BJJ guard game as it can give them a false sense of safety. Instead, focus on technical stand-ups, sweeps and upkicks against standing opponents, shrimping, and scrambles. The goal should always be to get back to your feet as fast as possible. Restraint escapes should also be part of defense grappling. Wrist grab escapes/hand fighting, defending grabs from behind, and headlock defense will prevent your participants from being restrained.

Although grappling defense should be the focus, you do need to also teach grappling offense. Knowing how to restrain someone is vital for community defense. In addition to fights, restraints can also be used for safety work/physical de-escalation, mental health crisis intervention, and other less extreme encounters. Take note from BJJ and bouncer training. Submissions are also vital for community defense. Unfortunately, many require going to the ground and being in undefendable positions that cannot be disengaged from quickly. Instead, focus on standing chokes such as the standing guillotine or standing rear naked choke which allows the participant to reassess the situation if necessary.

Striking

Striking is the most important area to train and should occupy a majority of training time. This is because you will want to stay on your feet during confrontations and remain mobile. Striking also allows you to deal the greatest amount of damage in the shortest period of time. When training striking you should focus on punches. The average person has better coordination with their hands than their feet. Others may have mobility issues that make certain kicks more difficult even when they're not wearing jeans or other restrictive clothing. It is for this reason that your program should focus on boxing and other disciplines that specialize in punches. You should also incorporate MMA and bare knuckle boxing defense as we won't be wearing large gloves outside of the gym. To accomplish this, parrys should be limited and there should be more of an emphasis on using forearm pillars for the high guard. Also, there needs to be a greater emphasis on using footwork and head movement for defense.

Just because we want to emphasize punches doesn't mean we should neglect other striking techniques and arts such as Muay Thai or Dutch Kickboxing. We just need to train them in the correct way. As said before, high kicks are difficult to learn and are risky in some situations. However, leg kicks can be mastered by nearly anyone, are low risk/high reward, and can be thrown no matter what someone is wearing. Train these instead of high roundhouses. The clinch is also great for community defense. It is perfect for close quarters engagements and can help line up multiple attackers or throw people to the ground. Building off of the clinch, you can also teach elbows to the head and knee strikes to the body. These are lower risk techniques due to the elbows and knees being harder than knuckles and less prone to injury. They are also great for chaotic scenarios. Lastly, teeps/push kicks are very effective in community defense scenarios. They can help you maintain distance against an aggressive or armed attacker and are one of the few techniques you can use while linking arms or restrained. You should also teach oblique kicks which target the knees to cause hyperextension. Oblique kicks are low risk and are highly effective against untrained or out of shape opponents.

Finding a Training Space

After deciding on an attendance model you will need to pick a space to train at. You will need to balance the accessibility (location, price, covid precautions, welcoming nature) as well as privacy, amenities, etc...

Outdoors

Outdoors spaces are some of the most accessible options and are perfect for programs that are just starting out or have limited resources. While any outdoor space will do, public parks will probably be your best bet. Your city most likely has plenty of them to choose from that are both centrally located and readily accessible via public transportation. The two biggest advantages are that outdoor spaces are free and more covid safe. This will allow you to spend what funds you have on gear and other necessities. Also, more covid conscious people are more likely to attend in outdoor settings.

However, one of the major drawbacks is that you are exposed to the elements. This will limit your ability to train when it's excessively hot or cold, raining, or there's poor air quality. Depending on your local climate you may have to take a good chunk of the year off until the weather improves. One way to mitigate the weather factor is by practicing somewhere with a covered area. Many parks and public schools have these. However, on the days when the weather is bad you may have to compete with others who are also trying to use it. On days that you will be doing grappling or ground work you can move to a nearby grassy area.

Privacy is another factor to consider. You won't just be exposed to the weather, you will be exposed to passers-by. Training near the road and main perimeter sidewalks may draw too much unwanted attention. Conversely, trying to be super secret could also raise suspicion. A random civilian stumbling upon a group sparring in a clearing in the woods might

just have the opposite effect you were looking for. Away from the road, but not hiding is preferable.

Grappling does become an issue with outdoor spaces. Even a grassy area is typically too hard and abrasive for some activities such as explosive takedowns or full on jiu-jitsu rolls. This is especially true for newer martial artists who are less controlled or don't know how to properly take a fall which can lead to injuries. Due to this, you will need to adjust your lesson plan.

Lastly, make sure your training spot is close to bathrooms, water fountains, light sources, and other amenities you may need.

Community Center

Community centers are another great option. They provide a space that is sheltered from the elements and those not in the program, allow for the potential storage of gear, and help you connect to the broader community. The best option would be a leftist space/mutual aid center. Other options include queer resource centers or neighborhood community centers. If there is a rental fee you can ask for a small donation from your participants to pay for it.

Leftist spaces would most likely be exciting to have you train there. They are also more likely to rent it for free or at a discount. Plus, your classes would bring in a much needed culture of martial arts and fitness to the space. Your participants would also be connected to the projects and organizing at the space and be able to get involved more easily. This way you will both help each other's organizing efforts expand.

Another option are queer or cultural centers. If you are hosting an open class for queer/BIPOC self-defense they may let you train there for free or cheaply. However, you may get some pushback if it's closed and/or open to all demographics. Neighborhood community centers are also a possibility.

In-Program Training

Much of your program's training will depend on the specific goals and needs of your community. However, there are some general tips and standards that will be universal for most programs. First off, don't try to reinvent the wheel. Shamelessly steal the drills, pad work sessions, combos, techniques, and exercises that you already train at your gym. Don't worry, your coaches stole them from their past coaches. If need be, adapt them to fit your participants' needs and your program's training culture. However, there are techniques taught at most gyms that are not appropriate for community defense or training methods that are unique to the situations we expect to be in. This is why you will need to have an emphasis on applicable and easy to master techniques, practicing likely scenarios, mental/physical conditioning, weapons training, and a solid curriculum.

Applicable, Low Risk, and Easy to Master

A street confrontation does not look like a combat sport that takes place in a ring. It is fast, dirty, unpredictable, has higher stakes, and oftentimes takes place in confined spaces or low visibility. This means that not everything that works in a sports setting will work in real world scenarios. It is for this reason that we must focus on techniques that are applicable to the threats we face. Street conflicts are high stakes with potentially serious consequences. This requires us to teach techniques that are low risk, high reward. Lastly, many martial artists spend years if not a lifetime to hone their craft in the gym and often have the privilege of money, time, and other resources to assist them along the way. We do not have such luxuries. Even if your program could offer the number of classes a commercial gym does at an affordable price, a majority of your participants would not want or be able to attend as often as dedicated martial artists do while still committing to their organizing work. Besides, your participants may have to use these techniques in the immediate future. This means your techniques need to be focused on those that are easy to learn and master.

Section 3:

Training and Instruction



You can rent the space and choose the attendance model that fits your needs. However, they will be more expensive than leftist spaces or resource centers.

The perfect space would allow you to store equipment on site so you won't have to haul it back home each day or coordinate handing it off to other instructors. If there is enough storage space you may even be able to store smaller mats that can be quickly set up and broken down. This would allow for more grappling centered classes.

The downsides to these options are funds and covid exposure. Asking for even a small fee may limit the attendance, especially over the long term. This is money that could go towards gear. There is also the risk of an unusually small attendance for a class which would leave the instructor liable to cover the rest. It's hard enough to find instructors who are willing to teach for free, let alone potentially having to *pay* to teach. Also, you will need to take added covid precautions such as requiring masks and possibly air purifiers.

Gym

Holding classes at a martial arts gym is the biggest mixed bag of all the options. If you can make it work it will offer everything that you need to run a full training program. Martial arts gyms will already have mats, pads, bags, etc.. This will allow for classes of all types, specialized techniques, and drills for different scenarios. However, there are potential barriers you will need to navigate.

The best gym to ask is the one you have already trained at for years. Even better if you work there. This means that you will already have a working relationship and established trust with the owner(s) and coaches. This will grant you more leeway than some stranger coming in off the streets.

Many gyms offer free or discounted self-defense classes as a way to give back to their community or encourage those who attend to get a gym membership. You can offer to teach a class for free and then invite your comrades to attend. However, this would then be an open attendance model where the gym itself is advertising it publicly and you would spread the word via back channels. The advantage to this approach is that your participants will be able to train in relative anonymity because to the casual observer they are just individuals who attend a local self-defense class. However, this means that you will be less able to steer the culture. A good chunk of the participants will not be part of your program which will automatically shift it. In order to cater to the largest number of people (which will likely be the owner's request as an open class is typically used to get everyday people to join the gym) you'll also have to adjust your teachings and instruction. This can make the class less applicable to the needs of leftists, lead to water down techniques, eliminate liberatory teaching styles and accessible policies, steer the focus to self-defense and away from community defense, etc...

If you are on very good terms with the owner(s) and they are sympathetic to your cause and goals you may be able to host a class at the gym outside of business hours. This would allow you to utilize all the gym has to offer while still retaining your desired attendance model and training culture. However, with the classes being outside the gym's business hours you may not get your ideal day or time to host the class. You may also be required to obtain your own insurance policy to protect yourself and the gym from potential lawsuits.

One thing to keep in mind with gym spaces is that it is a business. Small business owners have a well earned reputation of being reactionary and protective of their assets. If your program brings heat down on their business which results in the loss of revenue they may stop letting you use their space. We have also seen gym owners who start off supportive only to turn against leftists as their politics shift in the changing climate. This would require you to find a new space.

TL;DR

If I was going to recommend a combination of these infrastructure options for the average program just starting out I would suggest: Having a hybrid attendance policy that starts out a bit more strict and loosens as the program grows with it eventually becoming open. Start training in an outdoor space on a covered court with an open field nearby during the warm months and moving into a community center during winter with long term plans in place to eventually transition into a permanent space. Begin the program with essential personal and communal gear with Tier 2 and above being obtained as the program adds more specialized classes and moves into a permanent space. However, I wanted to include all the variations so that you have potential options available to adapt to your current environment and expand how you see fit.



Covid Air Purifier - Helps prevent the spread of covid and other sickness which will make the space more accessible to those who are more covid cautious. (\$200)

Ultimate Tier:

The ultimate tier builds off of the previous tiers. It is suitable for large, financially secure programs with a permanent gym space. The options for this kind of situation are endless! You can add equipment as you go, wait until an item goes on sale, improvise your own version, etc... The below prices are estimates if you purchase the items outright, but there are plenty of opportunities to keep costs *MUCH* lower. You can create a bare bones, hole in the wall environment or a crown jewel that features all the creature comforts your heart desires. The choice is yours! Here are some options...

Permanent Grappling Mats - These are thicker than the portable options and affix to the floor. They allow for more aggressive types of grappling, better grip, more space, and greater longevity. (\$700 - 1,000 per 10' x 10' section)

Mat cleaner, Mop, Broom - Larger versions of the Tier 3 options. (\$150)

Vacuum, Broom, Dustpan, Mop - To keep the rest of the gym clean - (\$150)

Garbage Can/Bags - (\$40)

Covid Air Purifiers - (\$600)

Heavy Bags w/ Mounting Hardware - Allows for individuals to train solo and develop power. (\$300 each)

Monster/Pole Bag - Super heavy and dense bag used for body conditioning and power strikes. (\$300)

Wall Mats - Vital to safely train "wall work" which simulates getting pinned against an obstacle, navigating around an obstruction, etc... (\$100 per 2' section)

Workout Equipment - Allows your participants to work on their physical fitness and technique in the same space. Options include benches, squat racks, olympic bars, metal plates, rubber plates, dumb bells treadmills, pull-up bars, resistance bands, lifting mats, boxes, etc... (prices vary)

Permanent Space

A permanent space is the ultimate goal for any well established training program. This would be a hub of the leftist community in your city that would uplift a culture of martial arts and fitness while being tied into other projects. It would be a space where comrades can safely train in ways that directly correspond to their needs and potential threats. It would allow comrades to live happier and healthier lives while having the tools to defend it. Isn't that the dream? Of course; but let's not get ahead of ourselves. This is by far the most difficult of all space options and is likely only appropriate for large, well established training programs in cities with a robust and well connected Left.

Having your own permanent space will allow you to eventually outfit it with all the amenities and gear you would expect from a martial arts gym as well as anything that would assist with training for unique scenarios (climbing fences/walls, mass engagements, shields, impact or bladed weapons, sparring with obstacles, sound/light enhanced mental conditioning, etc...). You will also have more potential training days as you won't need to work around someone else's schedule, daylight, weather, or other obstructions. It can also be used for social events such as fight watch parties, movie nights, and cookouts which will only tighten the comradery.

There are a few options for how a space like this could come about and are dependent on your local situation and group capabilities. One option is a squatted building. The main advantage to this option is that it's free! All of your funds can go to equipment, outreach, and supporting your participants. However, unless your city has strong squatters rights laws or simply doesn't care, then a space like this isn't truly permanent. Even worse, you could lose all of your gear and equipment from a sudden sweep or break in.

Another option is to team up with another community project and join the space they are already looking into. Maybe they need the office

and common area spaces of a property, but have no use for the warehouse and garage portions. Maybe they will have the extra space regardless or maybe you could help supplement their rent. This will of course require a solid working relationship with this project. If you can all make it work it can be much more affordable for everyone. One downside is that your projects' fates are now tied together meaning it could come crumbling down if one of you folds or you have a falling out.

The last option is renting a space of your own. This will let you build your own gym from the ground up and form it into the training space that your program has always dreamed of. However, there are far more considerations that will need to go into this and more potentials for failure. First, you will need to rent a space that has what you need, but is still affordable. Unless your city has dirt cheap property prices this means that you will have to find a balance between size (which will cost more, but allow you to train more people) and location (less centrally located spaces will cost less, but are also less accessible which could limit the number of participants).

The main downside to having a permanent space is the cost. Unless you find a space that is free to use or you set up the program as a non-profit and get a sizable grant you will have to come up with a good chunk of money for rent. This means that you will have to charge your participants. It would be easy to make your program cheaper than a majority of gyms, but some people will still be priced out. You can cut costs if instructors are willing to teach for free. However, even the most dedicated comrades probably wouldn't be willing to donate their time more than a class or two a week. This would limit the total number of classes which could mean less money coming in. It may actually make more financial sense to offer a small stipend if it would lead to more drop-ins and monthly memberships. You can offset the costs by having flexible rates where well off participants can choose to pay extra to help cover those who are cash strapped. You can also hold regular fundraisers, sell merchandise with your program's name on it, buy gear in bulk but still sell at below market value, etc...

Tier 2:

Tier 2 builds off of the Essential gear list and adds equipment that will allow for more diverse striking and grappling options. This gear set will allow you to add full Muay Thai/Kickboxing training along with No-Gi Jui-Jitsu and Wrestling. This gear includes...

Thai Pads - Allows for full Muay Thai pad work. They offer all the benefits as focus mitts, but also allow for kicks, knee, and elbow strikes. They also let participants throw harder strikes to develop power and bone conditioning. You will need 1 pair for every 2 expected participants. (\$60 per pair)

Kick Shields - Allows for more diverse kicking options including leg kicks and teeps. You will need 1 for every 2 expected participants but can get away with 1 for every 4 if you do rotations. (\$60)

Headgear - Allows for safer sparring with less chances for black eyes, bruises, scratches, etc... Not everyone will be using them and those who are can share and rotate when needed. (\$40)

Shin Pads: Allows for safely practicing kicks until participants can get their own, higher quality pair. You will need about 1 pair for every 3-4 expected participants. (\$12 - 20)

Tier 3:

Tier 3 builds off of the Essentials and, if appropriate, Tier 2 as well. It is suitable for when an indoor space that has storage for gear is available. This negates the need to transport it to and from every class which gives you more options. However, it also assumes that it will need to be stored away in-between classes so that the space can be used for other purposes. This means it will need to be of reasonable size, quickly set up/broken down, and not permanently fixed to the floor/walls/etc...

Portable Grappling Mats - Allows for full wrestling and Jiu-Jitsu styled grappling including scrambles, takedowns, and limited throws. They can also allow for trips and sweeps during Muay Thai sparring. (\$300 - 600 per 10' x 10' section)

Mat Cleaner and Mop - Keeps your mats clean and free of fungal infections. (\$60)

As you expand you can acquire the communal gear needed to run Muay Thai, Jiu-Jitsu, Kali, or wrestling classes as well as outfitting a permanent space. It is also important to improvise and keep the gear as minimalistic as functionally possible as there are limits to storage and transportation capabilities. Furthermore, the more the gear costs the less money is available which could be spent on other needs for the program. Consider holding fundraisers or asking more well-off participants to pitch in to help purchase these items. You can also ask participants and local gyms to donate their old gear to get the program off the ground or construct your own gear. Non-profit grants are also an option. Lastly, this is only an example of gear and tier options and it is not meant to be static. Please alter, combine, and subtract how you see fit.

Essentials:

Essential communal gear is the bare minimum type of equipment you will need to teach a safe and effective class. This gear set will allow instructors to teach a full boxing program with some supplemental grappling and clinch work. This gear includes...

Covid Rated Masks - Allows for participants to train in case they forget theirs. (\$6 - 20 per 50 - 100)

Sanitizer Spray - Disinfects dirty/sweaty gear to prevent infections and fungal outbreaks. (\$5 per can)

Boxing/Muay Thai Gloves - Allows for participants to try out the class first or save up before buying their own. You will need about 1 pair for every 3-4 expected participants. (\$25 per pair)

Focus Mitts - Allows for improved punching technique and accuracy, practicing combinations, defense, and giving participants a solid target to connect with. You will need 1 pair for every 2 expected participants. (\$25 per pair)

Misc: Sunscreen, basic first aid kit, electrolyte packets, emergency snacks, etc...

If possible, try to have at least some classes be free to the public.

This all leads to the biggest potential issue. The larger the program becomes and the more money is involved the more you will need to treat it like a business or non-profit. The last thing you need is to be audited for tax evasion when you're not even making any money. This would require additional organizers who are knowledgeable on taxes, accounting, applying for grants, navigating bureaucracy, etc... There are plenty of ways to go about this in healthy and productive ways so long as you are guided by your politics/the program's culture and aim for controlled growth. With enough care you can maintain the collective work and decision making process and uplift the revolutionary ideals as an example for all. However, it is also possible for it to morph into what you have been fighting against and mirror capitalist businesses, complete with employer/employee dynamics. You may also find yourself spending more time crunching numbers instead of teaching and training martial arts. For many this is either not worth it or straight up goes against their ethics.

A permanent space will also change your attendance model. Though you could start off with a hybrid model in order to solidify the group culture you may eventually have to move to a more open model if you have rent to pay. This could put it on the radar or the Right or make it the target of state surveillance or other forms of repression. However, if your community is strong and large enough to have a permanent space then you are probably also strong and large enough to resist these pressures.

It is important to realize what you have the knowledge and capacity to accomplish. It is better to have a scaled-back and ethical program that is sustainable for the long-term rather than a large project that folds quickly or becomes just another MMA gym.

Acquiring Gear

The next step in the process is acquiring gear. Gear is essential to being able to train safely, in multiple styles, and utilizing a variety of techniques. Some of the gear will be required for participants to supply themselves in order to be part of the program or attend certain classes while the rest will be supplied by the program itself in order to run classes and drill certain art forms.

Required Personal Gear

There is some gear that you can't possibly supply for everyone and/or wouldn't want to share. These items fall under personal gear and participants are expected to obtain them in order to attend classes. In order to make the program more accessible you will want to make personal gear requirements as low as possible while still being able to accomplish your training goals. You can start off with the essentials and as you expand you can have classes that require the personal gear needed to train Muay Thai, Jiu-Jitsu, Kali, wrestling, and other art forms. The prices below are an estimated cost for decent quality budget/entry level options .

Essentials:

Essential personal gear is the bare minimum type of equipment that is needed to train safely and effectively. This gear set will allow participants to train in a full boxing program with some supplemental grappling and clinch work.

This gear includes...

Boxing/Muay Thai Gloves – 14 - 16oz and suitable for both pad work and sparring. (\$20 - 30)

MMA Mouth Guard – Able to mold to the mouth/teeth. (\$15 - 20)

MMA Cup (if applicable to the participant) – (\$15 - 20)

Hand Wraps - Optional, but recommended. Allows for full power strikes with less chance of spraining wrists or hurting hands. (\$5 - 10)

Covid Rated Mask – (\$6 - 20 per 50)

Practical Clothing - Clean, form fitting clothes free of studs, safety pins, zippers, large pockets, etc... No dangling or sharp jewelry, piercings, gauges, etc...

Tier 2:

Tier 2 builds off of the Essential gear list and adds equipment that will allow for more diverse striking and grappling options. This gear set will allow you to add full Muay Thai/Kickboxing training along with No-Gi Jui-Jitsu and Wrestling. This gear includes...

Essential Gear – See above

Muay Thai Shin Pads – Allows for kicks in drills and sparing. (\$20 - 50+)

Muay Thai Knee and Elbow Pads – Allows for knees and elbows in drills and sparing. (\$20 - 50+)

Rash Guard - Or other tight fitting, non-restrictive, and non-abrasive clothing which allows for grappling. (\$30 for a rash guard, other suitable clothes can be bought cheaply or thrifted)

Tier 3:

Tier 3 builds off of the previous two tiers and offers a complete package that allows participants to train in all disciplines similar to what is expected at MMA gyms.

Essential & Tier 1 Gear – See above

Jiu-Jitsu Gi – Allows for Gi Jiu-Jitsu Judo which simulates grappling while wearing clothes and utilizing them for your offense. (\$70+)

Communal Gear

There is other gear where it doesn't make sense for participants to purchase themselves. This may be because it isn't used at every class, is shared by training partners or the whole class, or is prohibitively expensive. In these cases the gear would be obtained by the program. Similar to personal gear, different classes in different disciplines require different communal gear.